

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 3197

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, SP

SUBJECT: BRIAN ATWOOD AND EMBOFF DISCUSS CURRENT REVIEW OF
CATHOLIC EPISCOPATE

1. BRIAN ATWOOD AND EMBOFF DISCUSSED CURENT POLITICAL
SITUATION WITH MSGR. MARTIN PATINO, THE VICAR-GENERAL OF THE
DIOCESE OF MADRID. IN GENERAL, THE CONVERSATION REFLECTED THE
ORIENTATION OF THE EPISCOPATE TOWARD A CHANGE
TO A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM AND A CONCERN THAT ARIAS MIGHT NOT
BE UP TO IT WHEN IT COMES TIME FOR HIM TO GIVE HIS SPEECH.
MARTIN PATINO EMPHASIZED HIS PERSONAL BELIEF THAT THE KING
REALLY WANTED TO DO THE RIGHT THING AND THAT HE WAS A POSI-
TIVE FORCE IN SPAIN.

2. WHAT WAS NEEDED, IN MARTIN PATINO'S VIEW, WAS FOR THE
GOVERNMENT TO STEP OUT SMARTLY ON THE REFORM QUESTION AND
MOVE AHEAD WITH A PROPERLY DRAWN UP REFERENDUM. HE NOTED
THAT THE MOOD AMONG MODERATE POLITICAL CIRCLES WAS MUCH
MORE OPTIMISTIC THIS WEEK, CITING CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIAL
DEMOCRATIC SOURCES FOR THE VIEW THAT A GOOD REFERENDUM WOULD BE
ANNOUNCED FOR JUNE. HE HIMSELF WONDERED WHETHER ARIAS
WOULD REALLY BE WILLING TO TAKE UP THE CUDGELS.

3. SO FAR AS CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS WERE CONCERNED, THE
CHURCH RECOGNIZED THAT OVERT PROGRESS ON THIS ISSUE WOULD
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BE A HELP TO LIBERALIZERS. IN THE LAST 24 HOURS , THE LAST

REMAINING OBSTACLE TO ANNOUNCING SOMETHING ON THE ORDER OF A FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT HAD APPARENTLY BEEN REMOVED. HE WAS HOPEFUL THAT THIS FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT --ALTHOUGH IT WOULD NOT BE CALLED THAT-- COULD BE MADE PUBLIC BEFORE LONG. IT WOULD ENCOMPASS TWO POINTS, THE RELINQUISHING BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ITS RIGHT IN THE NAMING OF BISHOPS AND THE RELINQUISHING BY THE CHURCH OF THE IMMUNITIES AND SPECIAL COURT SYSTEM WHEN CRIMINAL CHARGES ARE LEVIED AGAINST ECCLESIASTICS.

4. HE CONFIRMED AGAIN THERE WOULD BE NO CONCORDAT AS SUCH, BUT A SERIES OF AGREEMENTS, THE REMAINING ONES AFTER THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT TO BE TAKEN ON A STEP-BY-STEP BASIS.

5. THE CHURCH WOULD NOT PLAY A DIRECT POLITICAL ROLE, IT SOUGHT IN FACT TO DIVORCE ITSELF FROM THE STATE AND POLITICS, BUT IT WOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE ELEMENTAL QUESTIONS OF HUMAN FREEDOM AND DIGNITY. AND IF THE REFORM ISSUES TO BE PUT TO REFERENDUM WERE GOOD ONES THE CHURCH WOULD PROBABLY URGE PARTICIPATION IN THE REFERENDUM. OF COURSE IF THINGS STARTED TO GO BAD THE CHURCH WOULD SPEAK OUT AGAINST A RETURN TO REPRESSIVE PRACTICES, THIS BEING A MORAL ISSUE.

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